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Summary record of the 30th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 14 December 2004, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. MacKay ..... (New Zealand)
later: Ms. Lock (Vice-Chairman) ..... (South Africa)
later: Mr. MacKay (Chairman) ..... (New Zealand)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Kuznetsov

Contents

Agenda item 108: Programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 (*continued*)

First performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005

Strengthening the Department of Public Information, within the existing capacity, in order to support and enhance the United Nations web site in all official languages of the Organization: status of implementation

Agenda item 121: Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994 (*continued*)

Agenda item 122: Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 (*continued*)

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04-64519 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 108: Programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 (*continued*)

***First performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005* (A/59/578 and Add.1 and A/59/601)**

1. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller), introducing the first performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 (A/59/578 and Add.1), said that the report identified adjustments required because of variations in the rates of inflation and exchange and in standards assumed in the calculation of the initial appropriations. It also took into account the additional mandates that the General Assembly and the Security Council had approved after the appropriation of the programme budget and unforeseen and extraordinary items that could not be deferred to the second year of the biennium.

2. A summary of the increased net requirements was provided in paragraph 3. The revised estimate amounted to $3.351 billion, which represented an increase of $171.953 million compared with the current appropriation. The additional requirements could be broken down into three components: unforeseen and extraordinary expenses; decisions of policy-making organs, including special political missions; and variations in budgetary assumptions.

3. Commitments in the amount of $7.4 million had been entered into in order to meet unforeseen and extraordinary expenses. The bulk of that figure reflected commitments certified by the Secretary-General as relating to the maintenance of peace and security, which had totalled $7.3 million. In addition, commitments in the amount of $103,000 had been certified by the President of the International Court of Justice as relating to unforeseen expenses in respect of the Court. Commitments for inter-organizational security measures had totalled $4,200. Those expenses had related to the United Nations share for the cost of chartering aircraft to evacuate staff from Côte d'Ivoire.

4. An additional amount of $40.6 million was required under the second component, decisions of policy-making organs, including special political missions. The increase was mainly attributable to requirements for strengthening the security and safety of United Nations operations, staff and premises. The General Assembly, in its resolution 58/295, had authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments not to exceed $38 million for the financing of security infrastructure projects and had requested him to report thereon in the context of the first performance report. The revised requirements for those projects totalled $39.7 million. Also, an additional appropriation of $815,000 was required for the provision of support to the Office of the President of the General Assembly in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/216, while an amount of $37,400 was requested to cover expenditures relating to the holding of a Security Council meeting in Nairobi in November 2004.

5. As to the third component, the additional requirements arising from variations in budgetary assumptions were outlined in paragraphs 26 to 42 of the report. An increase of $79.4 million was required owing to the difference between the exchange rates assumed in the initial appropriation and the rates actually experienced in 2004 and those projected for 2005. The weakening of the United States dollar against the Swiss franc and the Euro had resulted in increased requirements of $54.9 million and $15.6 million, respectively. Adjustments resulting from actual experience in 2005 would be reflected in the second performance report. The total additional appropriation arising from inflationary pressure amounted to $32.8 million. Schedules 1, 2 and 4 contained revised inflation rates based on promulgated post adjustment multipliers and the latest available information on consumer price indices and actual versus budgeted cost-of-living adjustments. A net increase of $3.1 million was required to cover adjustments to standard costs. That figure was based on analysis of actual payroll data and reflected the net effect of changes in standard salary costs, common staff costs and staff assessment rates.

6. The realized level of vacancies experienced in 2004 had been 5.5 per cent for staff in the Professional and higher categories and 3.2 per cent for staff in the General Service and related categories, compared with effective budgeted rates of 6.1 and 3.9 per cent, respectively. The proposed net increase of $8.6 million reflected the vacancy rate realized in 2004 and the rate projected for 2005 for staff in the Professional and higher categories. The suspension of recruitment for new vacancies in the General Service and related categories had resulted in a gradual increase in actual

vacancies experienced. However, it would be premature to adjust the overall biennial vacancy rate budgeted in respect of the General Service, since that trend was expected to continue. Such an adjustment, if required, would be considered in the context of the second performance report. The Secretariat was experiencing some difficulties as a result of the suspension and might submit proposals to address the situation in the latter part of 2005.

7. Information on the income sections of the programme budget was contained in paragraphs 60 to 63 of the report. Reductions of $33,700 and $528,200 in net income were projected under income sections 2 and 3, respectively.

8. Section G dealt with specific issues raised in General Assembly resolutions and matters raised in accordance with procedures previously approved by the Assembly. He recalled that the General Assembly had invited the Economic and Social Council to review its decision 2003/269 with a view to examining the possibility that additional meetings of the Commission on Human Rights might be required. During the Commission's sixtieth session, six additional meetings had been held. Related services had been provided by utilizing existing capacity. Therefore, no additional resources had been required.

9. The Assembly had decided, in paragraph 30 of its resolution 58/270, that the provision for overtime and night differential should be reduced by $2 million and that the relevant reductions should not be applied to security operations. The Secretary-General had been invited to elaborate on resource needs for overtime and night differential in the context of the first performance report. Expenditure had been slightly ahead of expected averages, largely reflecting increased overtime needs in respect of security. Any adjustment needed would be signalled in the second performance report.

10. No resources had been included in the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 for the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs*. Efforts to mobilize extrabudgetary resources had met with little success.

11. The Assembly had requested the Secretary-General, in 2004-2005, in paragraph 14 of its resolution 58/270, to commence, on an experimental basis, the redeployment of posts as necessary to meet the evolving needs of the Organization. It had decided that the experiment should be carried out in accordance with a number of principles, which were listed in paragraph 51 of the report. Difficulties had been experienced in 2004 because no surplus staffing capacity available for redeployment to other programmes had been identified. The Administration had therefore decided to adopt a more proactive approach in 2005. Rather than depend on the existence of vacancies, it would forecast those posts that would become vacant due to retirement. The same strategy was being applied in the review of staffing requirements in the formulation of budget proposals for 2006-2007.

12. There were three proposals for technical adjustments to the programme budget. First, the Secretary-General was requesting the reclassification of one Field Service post in the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to the P-4 level. Second, in order to facilitate the incorporation of national information officers formerly serving at United Nations information centres located in Western Europe in the newly established regional hub in Brussels, it was proposed that five National Officer posts should be reflected in the staffing table as P-3 positions. Third, a net zero adjustment was necessary to correctly reflect the appropriation for the technical secretariats of the Fifth and Sixth Committees. The General Assembly had decided, in paragraph 43 of its resolution 58/270, to defer consideration of the Secretary-General's proposal for the transfer of the two secretariats to the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. In accordance with that decision, the related appropriation should have reflected maintenance of the status quo. However, the amounts involved had been erroneously appropriated under section 2 (General Assembly affairs and conference services).

13. Lastly, the addendum to the first performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 (A/59/578/Add.1) provided a review of the efforts to increase the availability and use of the United Nations Official Document System (ODS) over the past two bienniums and an overview of improvements currently under way to enhance the system.

14. **Mr. Kuznetsov** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ)), introducing the related report of ACABQ (A/59/601), said that, while the first performance report was important, it was also fairly routine and was

prepared on the basis of a well-established methodology. The adjustments proposed were for the most part non-discretionary, and all the necessary data and figures were contained in the Advisory Committee's report. Accordingly, he would confine his comments to two interrelated matters: resources for the Office of the President of the General Assembly and redeployment of posts.

15. While the Advisory Committee had always recognized the need for adequate backstopping of the important function of President of the General Assembly, the proposal by the Secretary-General ran counter to General Assembly resolution 58/126, in which the Assembly had decided that the resources available to the Office of the President in personnel and other support costs should be augmented from within existing resources. The Advisory Committee was not satisfied that sufficient effort had been made to effect such redeployments, especially given the increased flexibility granted to the Secretary-General with regard to redeployment of posts.

16. The Advisory Committee was disappointed at the apparent reluctance of the Secretariat to comply with the General Assembly's directives on redeployment of posts in resolution 58/270. It believed that greater effort should be made to utilize the flexibility given to the Secretary-General in implementing mandated programmes, rather than proceeding automatically to propose new posts.

17. With the exception of the reduction mentioned in paragraph 13, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should approve the revised estimates contained in the report of the Secretary-General, subject to such adjustments as might be necessary as a result of its consideration of matters currently before it.

18. **Mr. Zellenrath** (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the candidate countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey), the stabilization and association process countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), and, in addition, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, said that he would refer in his statement to both the first performance report (A/59/578) and the proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 2006-2007 (A/59/415), introduced at the Committee's 29th meeting. The overall level of the programme budget was expected to increase to approximately $3.7 billion in 2006-2007, compared with an initial appropriation of $2.6 billion in 2002-2003. That represented a significant challenge for the States members of the European Union, which, collectively, bore 37 per cent of the Organization's expenses. The European Union recognized the increasing demands placed on the United Nations and appreciated the efforts made by programme managers in the programme budget outline to avoid calls for additional resources.

19. Against a background of pressing need, it was all the more vital to identify ways to reallocate existing resources to priority areas. In that connection, the European Union, like the Advisory Committee, would like to have seen more progress in utilizing the flexibility given to the Secretary-General to redeploy posts. It noted with concern that the suspension of recruitment for new vacancies in the General Service and related categories had resulted in a gradual increase in realized monthly vacancy rates and difficulties in implementing planned programmes of work. That had not been the intention of the General Assembly in approving the suspension, which had been aimed at encouraging Professional staff to improve management of processes and functions and make greater use of information and communication technologies.

20. The European Union was ready to approve the Secretary-General's proposals and the recommendations of ACABQ with regard to the first performance report and the proposed programme budget outline for 2006-2007. In particular, it was prepared to incorporate the additional costs for safety and security in the total appropriation for 2004-2005, and it acknowledged that requirements in that area beyond 2005 would exceed the amount approved in the context of the proposed programme budget outline. However, it would continue to monitor closely the ongoing process of reform in the United Nations, especially the reforms approved in General Assembly resolution A/58/268. It concurred with the Secretary-General that budget proposals should reflect the benefit of further reviews of possible obsolete activities, additional cost-effective measures and simplified procedures.

21. **Mr. Al-Ansari** (Qatar), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group had noted the revised requirements under the expenditure

sections of the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 and the reduction recommended by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 13 of its report (A/59/601). It had also taken note of the difficulties experienced by the Secretariat in identifying posts for redeployment and the Advisory Committee's comments thereon. With regard to paragraphs 48 to 50 of the first performance report (A/59/578), it called on the Secretariat to make every effort to ensure the continuation of the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs* in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 57/24 and 58/270. Lastly, it noted that no budgetary provision had been made for the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) for 2005, although that mandate was a continuing one. It looked forward to rectifying that situation.

22. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America) said that his delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that the first performance report was well prepared and contained adequate technical information and analysis. However, it was not clear whether the $39.7 million for security infrastructure projects (A/59/578, paras. 15 and 16) was being requested in addition to the $38 million already approved for that purpose. His delegation supported the Advisory Committee's comments regarding redeployment of posts. It was very disappointing that the Secretariat, which for years had bemoaned the lack of flexibility given it in implementing mandated programmes, had failed to comply with the General Assembly's directives in resolution 58/270. The Secretariat's vague promise to redouble its efforts in that area was not sufficient; a concrete plan of action was needed. He recalled that, in its report on the utilization and management of funds appropriated during the 2002-2003 biennium for strengthening the security and safety of United Nations premises (A/59/396), the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) had recommended that the Office of Central Support Services should surrender unspent 2002-2003 appropriations relating to projects deferred to the capital master plan. His delegation wished to know when that recommendation would be implemented. It had taken note of the disparities that had arisen as a result of the General Assembly's decision, in paragraph 31 of its resolution 58/270, to discontinue the practice of paying higher subsistence rates to middle- and senior-level United Nations staff members and would submit a proposal to correct that problem.

23. **Ms. Goicochea** (Cuba) said that her delegation appreciated the information provided in paragraph 8 of the first performance report regarding the budgetary provision for JIU for 2005. Those resources should be made available and the amount should be included in the total appropriation approved for 2004-2005. The time had come for the General Assembly to take a stand on the matter. Her delegation supported the Secretary-General's request for an additional appropriation to fund three posts in the Office of the President of the General Assembly. In that connection, it noted that no additional resources had been requested for the provision of transitional office accommodation and other support to the President-elect of the General Assembly. In view of the difficulties experienced by the Secretariat in implementing planned programmes of work as a result of the suspension of General Service recruitment, it might be appropriate for the General Assembly to consider the lifting of the suspension. Her delegation looked forward to the submission by the Secretariat of a proposal in that regard. Concerning the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs*, it supported the comments made by the representative Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. It would request additional information on the matter in informal consultations. Lastly, it agreed that the reclassification of a Field Service post in ECLAC to the P-4 level was justified.

24. **Ms. Udo** (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that the Group wished to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Group had supported the General Assembly's decision, in its resolution 58/126, to augment the resources available to the Office of the President of the General Assembly in personnel and support. With regard to the five additional posts for the Office decided on by the Assembly, it noted that only two had been made available through redeployment and that, for the remaining three positions, it had not been possible to identify vacant posts. That being the case, it wondered whether the Advisory Committee's recommendation that those positions should also be provided through redeployment was realistic.

25. **Mr. Saeb** (Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division) pointed out that the realized vacancy rate for staff in the Professional and higher categories in 2004 was 5.5 per cent. Therefore, the likelihood of identifying temporarily vacant posts to

meet the needs of the Office of the President of the General Assembly was low. Accordingly, temporary assistance funds had been sought. However, the Advisory Committee had recommended that the $815,000 requested should be absorbed from within existing resources. In his view, the insistence on redeploying vacant posts was not helpful when the vacancies did not exist. The Secretariat would, of course, pursue its efforts to provide the Office of the President with the resources approved by the Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.

26. In its resolution 58/295, the General Assembly had authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments not to exceed $38 million for the financing of security infrastructure projects. The Administration was now requesting conversion of the commitment authority into an appropriation (A/59/578, para. 16). The amount of the appropriation was given as $39.7 million. The increase was due to the application of updated costing parameters reflecting changes in the rates of exchange and inflation.

27. Concerning redeployment of posts, as the Controller had stated, the Secretariat would adopt a more proactive approach in 2005. That would entail identifying posts that were to become vacant due to retirement with a view to determining whether those posts could be added to the pool available for redeployment.

28. As to the recommendation of OIOS cited by the representative of the United States, he pointed out that the security infrastructure projects that the 2002-2003 appropriations were to have funded had merely been deferred. His office would consult with the Office of Central Support Services regarding the new schedule for the projects. While the Office had agreed that the appropriations could be surrendered, there would be little practical purpose in doing so if the planned activities were to be carried out in 2006-2007.

29. *Ms. Lock (South Africa), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

30. **Ms. Udo** (Nigeria) asked for confirmation from the Secretariat that it would do everything possible to ensure that the Office of the President of the General Assembly received all the necessary resources.

31. **Mr. Sach** (Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division), referring to paragraphs 17 to 20 of the first performance report (A/59/578), recalled that General Assembly resolution 58/126 called for the augmentation of resources available to the Office of the President of the General Assembly in order to enhance the authority and role of the Assembly. However, the resolution also stipulated that support for the Office should be augmented from within existing resources, and it was in that context that the Secretariat was taking steps to ensure that the five additional posts requested by the General Assembly were made available. Three of those posts had already been created. If the Secretariat was unable to identify vacant posts in respect of the remaining two positions, it would probably have to resort to temporary general assistance in order to meet the requirements of the Office. It would provide details of further efforts made in that regard in the second performance report.

Strengthening the Department of Public Information, within the existing capacity, in order to support and enhance the United Nations web site in all official languages of the Organization: status of implementation (A/59/336 and A/59/558)

32. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the Department of Public Information, within the existing capacity, in order to support and enhance the United Nations web site in all official languages of the Organization: status of implementation (A/59/336), said that the report had been submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 58/270, in which the Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to continue to strengthen the United Nations web site through further redeployment to the required language posts and to report on the status of its implementation to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.

33. The Department of Public Information was continuing to make every effort to implement General Assembly decision 57/579 and, as described in the report, progress had been made through the redeployment of 1 P-4, 1 P-3 and 6 General Service posts and a number of other innovative measures. However, with the continuing growth of content of the web site, there were no further opportunities within the Department's current budget to absorb the costs involved in implementing the proposals put forward in document A/57/355 without adversely affecting the implementation of Member States' mandates for other areas.

34. **Mr. Kuznetsov** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of ACABQ (A/59/558), pointed out that the Advisory Committee's report addressed two separate issues, namely, information and communications technology strategy and the United Nations web site, thereby reflecting the Committee's efforts to adopt a thematic approach and produce reports dealing with several related issues simultaneously.

35. He drew the Committee's attention to paragraphs 19 to 23 of the report, which focused on the United Nations web site. The Advisory Committee had noted that the Department of Public Information had taken steps to enhance the web site and facilitate the availability of materials in all languages by entering into arrangements with universities in various linguistic regional areas for pro bono translation of information materials. It welcomed those arrangements and encouraged the Department to continue that work. The Advisory Committee would revert to the question of current and future requirements of the Website Section and examine the Department's proposals in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 but, in the meantime, recommended that the General Assembly should take note of the Secretary-General's report.

36. **Ms. Wang** Xinxia (China) reiterated the importance attached by her delegation to enhancing the language capacity of the United Nations web site pursuant to General Assembly decision 57/579. The Department of Public Information had already filled six of the seven posts that had been approved for redeployment, but the remaining post, that of Website Assistant in Chinese, had not been filled owing to the absence of eligible internal candidates. Her delegation was concerned about that situation and wondered what measures were being taken by the Secretariat to remedy it. In addition, her delegation would be grateful for updated information about the recruitment status of the P-4 post, in particular the language service to which it had been allocated. Lastly, with reference to paragraph 6 of the Secretary-General's report, her delegation hoped that the Department of Public Information would ensure that sufficient resources were made available for the creation of six further posts.

37. *Mr. MacKay (New Zealand) resumed the Chair.*

38. **Mr. Elji** (Syrian Arab Republic) took note of the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations web site and reaffirmed his support for measures to enhance the site in all official languages. While the Department of Public Information had made progress in that regard, there were still imbalances in the capacity of the web site in certain languages which exacerbated existing inequalities. For instance, additional resources were required to produce high-quality web pages in Arabic, which was a bi-directional language that did not use Latin script.

39. He had taken note of the fact that the Secretariat was unable to redeploy any additional posts to enhance the web site. However, in view of the constantly increasing number of visitors to the site, additional staff capacity was clearly required. His delegation had agreed to suspend recruitment action on General Service staff on the understanding that the exceptions listed in paragraph 25 of General Assembly resolution 58/270 applied not only to language staff working in the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management but also to those staff working on the United Nations web site. In that connection, he called on the Department of Management to review its apparently erroneous interpretation of the relevant provisions of the resolution in question.

40. In light of the Secretariat's inability to redeploy posts to the Website Section within existing resources, it was clear that new posts must be created. He therefore requested the Secretariat to provide the Committee with written information on post requirements on the basis of the current workload.

41. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America) said that, by and large, his delegation agreed with the approach of ACABQ as described in its report. The United States was very satisfied with the progress made in developing the United Nations web site, which was an important tool for staff in New York and the global public. The success of the web site illustrated how much could be achieved with limited resources.

42. **Ms. Golcochea** (Cuba) endorsed the remarks made by the representatives of China and the Syrian Arab Republic and stressed that the issue of the United Nations web site should be viewed in the context of the implementation of multilingualism, which was designed to ensure equality and parity among all six official languages.

43. She had taken note of the report of ACABQ (A/59/558), but felt that the recommendation contained in paragraph 23 of that report lacked practical effects. While Cuba understood that the issue of resources was problematic, it expected the Committee to take a decision that would make a positive contribution to the achievement of full equality among all six official languages.

44. **Ms. M'rabet** (Tunisia) stressed that all diplomats working at Headquarters in New York and the general public in Member States must have access to the United Nations web site.

45. **Mr. Kozaki** (Japan), supported by **Mr. Zellenrath** (Netherlands), proposed convening brief informal consultations in order to endorse the recommendation made by ACABQ.

46. **Mr. Sach** (Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division), responding to the questions posed by the representative of China, recalled that the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations web site had been prepared in August. The P-4 post referred to in paragraph 7 of the report had been filled in December by an Arabic language official. The post of Website Assistant in Chinese remained vacant, despite the best efforts of the Secretariat. Unfortunately, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 58/270, that post could be filled only internally through redeployment.

47. As far as the interpretation of paragraph 25 of that resolution was concerned, he said that it made no provision for discretion on the part of the Secretary-General. The only exceptions to the recruitment freeze were quite specific and language posts related to the United Nations web site did not qualify. The Secretariat was therefore unable to exercise any flexibility in that regard.

48. **Mr. Elji** (Syrian Arab Republic), referring to paragraph 25 of General Assembly resolution 58/270, recalled that his delegation had been actively involved in the drafting thereof. The words "text processors" had been inserted by the Secretariat at a later date.

49. **Mr. Kramer** (Canada), referring back to the first performance report (A/59/578), enquired whether the Secretariat had conducted or was intending to conduct a study to evaluate the functions of some General Service staff with a view to determining whether the retention of those staff was justified. He also wished to know what measures the Secretariat planned on taking to test the flexibility of the system for the redeployment of posts.

50. With regard to the United Nations web site, he agreed with the remarks made by the representative of the United States of America and expressed his willingness to consider any proposals in that regard for the biennium 2006-2007.

51. Lastly, with regard to the comments made by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic concerning the wording of paragraph 25 of General Assembly resolution 58/270, he recalled that the words "editorial assistants" had been agreed upon by Member States during the relevant negotiations.

52. **Mr. Elji** (Syrian Arab Republic) concurred with the representative of Canada that the words "editorial assistants" had been agreed upon during the negotiations but reiterated that the words "text processors" had not. As text processor posts only existed in the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management, the Secretariat had deliberately added the reference to those posts in order to impose its restrictive interpretation of resolution 58/270.

53. Paragraph 42 of that resolution merely requested the Secretary-General to continue to strengthen the United Nations web site through further redeployment to the required language posts and made no mention of any requirement to do so within the existing resources of the Department of Public Information. When drafting that particular paragraph, Member States had intended to leave room for the Secretary-General to exercise the experimental flexibility referred to in paragraph 14 of that same resolution. In that connection, he wished to know why that flexibility could not be used to redeploy the necessary posts to the Website Section.

54. **Mr. Sach** (Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division), responding to the remarks made by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, recalled that paragraph 14 (f) of General Assembly resolution 58/270 stipulated that the experimental redeployment of posts should not apply to language services.

55. Turning to the questions posed by the representative of Canada, he reiterated that the restrictions inherent in General Assembly resolution

58/270 meant that the Secretariat had very limited opportunities to experiment with redeployment. However, two surveys on that issue had been conducted in 2004 and further efforts would be made in 2005 to identify potential vacancies before they arose. In addition, the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts had been working with the Office of Human Resources Management to define the terms of reference for the study on the role and functionality of General Service staff, which would be conducted in 2005.

56. **Ms. Udo** (Nigeria), referring to paragraph 5 of the report of ACABQ (A/59/558), said that her delegation would appreciate written clarification regarding the use of Galaxy to automatically assign candidates to current vacancies. She wondered how the system would work in practice.

57. **The Chairman** said that, although the first part of the Advisory Committee's report dealt with an issue different to that currently being discussed by the Committee, namely information and communications technology strategy, he would pass on the request of the representative of Nigeria to the Office of Human Resources Management.

Agenda item 121: Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994 (*continued*) (A/C.5/59/L.15)

58. **The Chairman** drew attention to the draft resolution entitled "Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994", contained in document A/C.5/59/L.15. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft resolution without a vote.

59. *Draft resolution A/C.5/59/L.15 was adopted.*

Agenda item 122: Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 (*continued*) (A/C.5/59/L.16)

60. **The Chairman** drew attention to the draft resolution entitled "Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991", contained in document A/C.5/59/L.16. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft resolution without a vote.

61. *Draft resolution A/C.5/59/L.16 was adopted.*

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.

United Nations A/C.5/59/SR.31

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Summary record of the 31st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 15 December 2004, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. MacKay ..... (New Zealand)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Kuznetsov

Contents

Agenda item 108: Programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 (*continued*)

Construction of additional conference facilities at the Vienna International Centre

Revised estimates and programme budget implications: effects of changes in rates of exchange and inflation

Agenda item 111: Administrative and budgetary coordination of the United Nations with the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency (*continued*)

Agenda item 117: United Nations pension system (*continued*)

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04-64665 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 108: Programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 (*continued*)

Construction of additional conference facilities at the Vienna International Centre (A/C.5/59/23)

1. **Mr. Belov** (Programme Planning and Budget Division), introducing the note by the Secretary-General on construction of additional conference facilities at the Vienna International Centre (VIC) (A/C.5/59/23), said that the Austrian Government had generously offered to build a new conference facility to house the secretariats of the VIC-based organizations (VBDs), namely the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), while the Centre underwent an asbestos removal project. Upon completion of the project, the new building would be handed over to the organizations to provide needed additional conference room space.

2. Part I of the note provided background information on the construction project, while part II covered the cost implications. The total cost of the project would not exceed €52.5 million, of which the host country would pay up to €50 million and the Vienna-based organizations €2.5 million. The contribution of the United Nations would not exceed €100,000 and would have no programme budget implications until the biennium 2008-2009.

3. The governing bodies of IAEA, UNIDO and CTBTO and the Government of Austria had signed a memorandum of understanding on the new conference facility, which was subject to approval by the General Assembly. In part III of the note, which contained conclusions and recommendations, the General Assembly was requested to approve the participation of the United Nations and other VBDs in the arrangements for the facility.

4. **Mr. Kuznetsov** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee had met with representatives of the Secretary-General at Headquarters and via videoconference at the United Nations Office at Vienna. They had provided information on plans for the proposed new conference building at VIC and on the memorandum of understanding between the Republic of Austria and the United Nations and other VBDs.

5. Since the early 1990s, the conference facilities at the Centre had become increasingly inadequate for the needs of the organizations headquartered at the Centre. The four organizations had requested the host country authorities in 2002 to make additional conference facilities available to them and had discussed conference-servicing requirements during the asbestos removal project at the Centre. Negotiations between the Austrian Government and the participating organizations had resulted in the signing of a memorandum of understanding in October 2004. The participating organizations had welcomed the offer of the Government of Austria to construct facilities to serve as temporary space for meetings that could not be held at the Centre during the asbestos removal. The prolonged negotiations had resulted in the late submission of the memorandum of understanding.

6. The terms of the arrangement included the provision of a fully functional space for meetings and conferences during the asbestos removal phase. In addition, the Austrian Government would bear the entire cost of the planning and construction of the additional facility, and the Parliament had approved up to €50 million for that purpose. The construction cost was estimated at €25 million, and €10 million had been set aside for cost overruns. The four organizations were confident that those amounts would be sufficient to cover any contingency. They would make a fixed and final lump-sum contribution of €2.5 million, which would be used to cover part of the cost of equipment and moveable furniture for the Centre, with the Austrian Government financing the remaining non-construction costs. The share of the contribution of each participating organization would be based on past usage and projections for conference requirements. Given the limited use of the new facility by the United Nations, a preliminary estimate of €100,000, or 4 per cent of the lump-sum contribution, had been made. The building would be the property of the host country and the moveable furniture and equipment would be the property of the participating organizations. Under paragraph 7 of the memorandum of understanding, the memorandum would become effective after its formal approval by the governing bodies of the participating organizations.

7. Arrangements for the operational and maintenance costs of the building after completion of the asbestos removal project were outlined in paragraph 9 of the note by the Secretary-General. In conclusion, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should approve the requests made in paragraph 10 of the note.

Revised estimates and programme budget implications: effects of changes in rates of exchange and inflation (A/C.5/59/24)

8. **Mr. Sach** (Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on revised estimates and programme budget implications: effects of changes in rates of exchange and inflation (A/C.5/59/24), said that the report provided estimates of outstanding programme budget implications and revised estimates using the costing parameters of the first performance report. As indicated in paragraph 7 of the first performance report for the biennium 2004-2005 (A/59/578), those amounts would be revised to reflect the costing parameters that had been approved by the Assembly in the context of its consideration of the first performance report and, subject to the decisions of the Assembly, would affect the level of the revised appropriation. Annex I contained a summary of revised estimates and programme budget implications, which indicated that out of some $99.8 million, an adjustment of slightly more than $2.9 million would be needed to ensure that the budget was costed on a consistent basis across all exchange rates and price levels. The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the special political missions had not been subjected to recosting, because the proposals had already been customized to the applicable rates in formulating the initial documentation for the report. In conclusion, the report was a technical paper to ensure that the budget was presented in a revised format and on a consistent basis. The request for the adjustment of $2.9 million was subject to the approval of the underlying revised estimates and programme budget implications. To the extent that they might be modified by the Committee, the relative adjustments would also need some minor changes to reflect any changes in programme budget implications or revised estimates in respect of which decisions had not yet been made.

9. **Mr. Kuznetsov** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee recommended the approval of the revised estimates contained in the report of the Secretary-General. The report detailed the impact of the application of the net costing parameters set out in the first performance report to revised estimates and statements of programme budget implications currently under consideration by the General Assembly. The Secretary-General had indicated that the application of updated parameters to those estimates would result in an overall increase of $2,951,600.

10. As indicated in paragraph 3 of the report, revised estimates for special political missions and the grant related to the future operation of INSTRAW had not been subject to recosting. Special political mission requirements covered specific provisions for the periods budgeted with respect to each mission and were updated on the basis of information available at the time that the estimates were prepared. Consequently, no revision was currently required. The INSTRAW grant had been calculated on the basis of specific costing information tailored to reflect the experience of the Institute. The estimates, including staff salaries, were calculated on the basis of full incumbency of the existing posts and related operating expenses for the period concerned. Therefore, the more general costing parameters used throughout the budget, including vacancy rate factors, were not relevant to INSTRAW.

11. The Advisory Committee noted that the parameters of the first performance report would be taken into account in any statements of programme budget implications issued subsequent to the submission of the report of the Secretary-General and prior to the conclusion of the work of the Fifth Committee at the main part of the Assembly's fifty-ninth session. Expected statements of programme budget implications for the high-level plenary meeting at the sixtieth session of the General Assembly and requirements relating to appropriation of the budgetary provisions for the Joint Inspection Unit would be prepared utilizing revised 2004-2005 rates.

Agenda item 111: Administrative and budgetary coordination of the United Nations with the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency (*continued*)

Draft decision A/C.5/59/L.19

12. *Draft decision A/C.5/59/L.19 was adopted.*

Agenda item 117: United Nations pension system (*continued*)

Draft resolution A/C.5/59/L.14

13. **The Chairman** said that in the English text of draft resolution A/C.5/59/L.14, the heading for section I should be revised to read "Actuarial matters".

14. *Draft resolution A/C.5/59/L.14, as orally revised, was adopted.*

15. **Ms. Nieto** (Ecuador) said that her delegation was pleased to join the consensus on draft resolution A/C.5/59/L.14 on the understanding that the information on the special situation of pensioners living in countries that had undergone dollarization and on possible proposals to attenuate the adverse consequences arising therefrom, which had been requested from the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board in paragraph 6 of section II of the draft decision would improve the situation of such pensioners. The situation of Ecuadorian nationals who had worked for the United Nations was different from that of United Nations pensioners from other countries, who had been dealt with more equitably. Pensioners were losing the purchasing power of their pensions in dollars and they had not benefited from the solutions put forward by the Fund. A solution to the problem was urgently needed. Lastly, her delegation would work constructively with the Fund to mitigate the adverse impact of dollarization on pensioners in accordance with section II, paragraph 6, of the draft resolution.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.